

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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Vessel Deal Spells Trade Troubles

By Drew Pearson

The President's difficulty in conducting foreign affairs while Congress looks over his shoulder, was never better illustrated than in the debate over purchasing 16 wooden minesweepers from Britain in return for Britain's purchasing \$2.5 billion worth of airplanes from us.



Woodrow Wilson had the problem after World War I and the League of Nations was defeated as a result. The defeat paved the way for World War II.

Mr. Truman had the problem after World War II, but, thanks to such enlightened GOP leaders as the late Sen. Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, he was able to win out over Republican isolationists.

Mr. Eisenhower did not have the problem, chiefly because Lyndon Johnson, then Senate Majority Leader, cooperated with the White House right down the line on foreign policy. Even when Ike came back from the abortive 1960 Summit Conference in Paris after the U-2 incident upset his move to end the cold war, LBJ backed him up.

Mr. Johnson has continued Ike's policy of improving relations with the Communist bloc, but now faces bitter

congressional opposition over relaxing trade barriers. The current battle is over whether the Export-Import Bank can loan money to facilitate trade with countries which have aided North Vietnam. Actually the Ex-Im Bank loans money to U.S. companies to promote U.S. exports, and the ban proposed by congressional isolationists would chiefly hurt American trade. Mr. Johnson has to worry not only about the Senate, which under the Constitution has a right to "advise and consent" on foreign policy, but about the House of Representatives, which has no such right.

House Jumps Traces

It was the House of Representatives, not the Senate, which slapped down the British over the relatively small but very significant 16 wooden minesweeper deal.

When Rep. John W. Byrnes (R-Wis.), once involved with Bobby Baker in a flagrant conflict of interest, introduced the "kick-the-British" amendment, Rep. Carl Albert (D-Okla.), the Majority Leader, and Rep. George Mahon (D-Tex.), Appropriations Committee chairman, argued that this was a slap at our best friend.

They were howled down by Byrnes, Gerry Ford (R-Mich.) and a combination of hawks and isolationists.

Rep. Robert Sikes (D-Fla.) countered that the minesweeper contract was part of

\$325 million in arms purchases the United States planned to make from Britain partly to offset the \$2.5 billion the British will spend here for the F-111. Sikes argued that the United States should stand by its commitment. But GOP Leader Ford raised the phony idea that the House must be consulted on foreign policy.

"It is our responsibility in the Congress as a co-equal branch of the Government to be fully advised before there is any agreement one way or another. In this case we were not consulted and therefore are not bound."

Proclaimed Byrnes: "Involved is the question of whether Congress will turn over to Secretary McNamara the responsibility given to us by the Constitution to provide and maintain the Navy. I ask that Congress assume its constitutional responsibility . . . I ask that we save Secretary McNamara from another needless risk involving the security of this country."

Sikes, hotly disputing this, explained that security wasn't involved, that the Constitution gave no foreign affairs power to the House.

"If we renege on this," he said, "the British will refuse to abide by their end of the bargain. And U.S. labor will lose eight times as much as it gains."

"We cannot live in a world all our own," said Sikes. "We must get along with other

people. We have to trade with them. Trade can never be altogether one way. We have the better of the deal, but regardless let us not repudiate our Nation's word."

"Let us no forget that we are dealing with one of the very few major countries which will stand with us in most of the questions which confront us in today's troubled world."

However, Sikes, Mahon and Albert pleaded in vain. The isolationists won. Later, because Sen. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), the Majority Leader, was in Japan, the Senate, under Democratic Whip Russell Long (D-La.), gave in without a fight.

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Gov. Kirk, Wife Leave Munich

MUNICH, Germany, Sept. 19 (UPI)—Florida Gov. and Mrs. Claude Kirk drove from Munich to the Black Forest today in brilliant sunshine on the last leg of their European honeymoon.

"We just loved Munich. And just look at the beautiful Florida weather we brought with us," Kirk said.

Kirk and his German-born wife, the former Erika Mattfeld, wore traditional Bavarian dress in Munich to mingle with thousands of tourists visiting the famous Oktoberfest, the autumn festival.